The Institute of Nautical Archaeology (INA) is a 501(c)3 non-profit research organization founded in 1972 by Dr. George F. Bass, the father of underwater archaeology. In 1976, INA moved to Texas A&M University (TAMU), and the graduate Nautical Archaeology Program (NAP) was established as an independent academic unit. In the early 1990s, sizable financial gifts made by INA Directors and matched by TAMU led to the establishment at TAMU of eight faculty endowments and two student scholarships currently worth almost $9m; three additional gifts by INA directors to the TAMU Foundation are valued at $375k. For over 40 years, INA has advanced the field of underwater archaeology not only in the U.S., by training future academics, museum curators, and state and federal underwater archaeologists, but around the world, by training students from nearly two dozen countries.

Today, NAP has 6 full-time faculty and ~40 graduate students completing either an M.S. in Maritime Archaeology and Conservation or a Ph.D. in Anthropology. NAP faculty teach general courses in archaeology and anthropology as well as more specialized courses in ship design and construction, the history of seafaring, naval treatises and maritime communities, and conservation of artifacts from underwater environments. NAP students receive field training on INA-sponsored shipwreck excavations all over the world, which are directed by NAP faculty or by some of INA’s more than 50 Research Associates. The synergistic nature of the INA-NAP relationship is evidenced by the fact that many INA Research Associates are NAP graduates. Some NAP students design and direct their own fieldwork projects with financial and logistical support from INA. Under INA President Deborah Carlson, the INA Archaeological Committee has awarded $70,000 annually in support of archaeological fieldwork, including the annual $25,000 Claude Duthuit grant to a single project. Numerous INA-excavated shipwrecks have been and continue to be published in the Ed Rachal Nautical Archaeology Series of TAMU Press, and interim reports appear in the INA Quarterly, on the INA website (www.nauticalarch.org) and in the monthly INA Insider e-newsletter.

INA also enjoys numerous assets independent of TAMU. The autonomous INA Foundation, which is not based at TAMU, is currently valued at $10m. In southwestern Turkey, INA built, owns, and operates the Bodrum Research Center (BRC), with offices, conservation laboratories and a 10,000-volume research library, at the heart of which is the private collection of classical archaeologist Homer Thompson. The BRC’s dormitory and corresponding guest suite accommodate visiting international scholars, researchers, and students. The BRC has long served as a base for INA surveys and excavations because it is home to INA’s brand new $2m, state-of-the-art 75-foot-long research vessel Virazon II and two-person submersible Carolyn, as well as a wide variety of excavation and safety equipment, including recompression chambers and remote sensing gear. Virazon II, which is the first ship to be built and classed as an Archaeological Research Vessel, is berthed near Bodrum but capable of carrying out fieldwork around the Mediterranean and beyond. The BRC is staffed by 20 individuals, most of whom are Turkish citizens.